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# The Labor Philosophy of James Riddle Hoffa

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THE LABOR PHILOSOPHY  
OF  
JAMES RIDDLE HOFFA

by  
Francis X. Quinn, S.J.

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the Institute  
of Industrial Relations in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Masters of Science in Industrial  
Relations

June  
1966

## APPROVAL SHEET

The thesis submitted by Francis X. Quinn has been read by three members of the faculty of the Institute of Industrial Relations.

The final copies have been examined by the Director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the thesis is now given final approval with reference to content, form, and mechanical accuracy.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Industrial Relations.

May 23, 1966  
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Signature of Advisor

## LIFE

Francis X. Quinn was born in Dunmore, Pennsylvania on June 9, 1932.

He graduated from Scranton Prep in June, 1950. He received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Liberal Arts from Fordham University in 1956; He completed a Masters of Arts in Education in 1958 at Fordham University and a Bachelor of Sacred Theology at Woodstock College, Woodstock, Maryland in 1964.

In 1959 he was a recipient of Teacher of the Year award from the Freedom Foundation.

He has taught at Georgetown Prep (1957 - 1960), at Georgetown University (summer 1962 & 1963) and Loyola University (1966).

He is the author of two books, The Ethical Aftermath of Automation (Newman, 1962), and Ethics, Advertising, and Responsibility (Westminister, 1963).

He began his studies at Loyola University in June, 1965 and will complete his requirements by June, 1965.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this thesis is to study the labor philosophy of James R. Hoffa, President of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Chauffeurs, Warehousemen and Helpers of America. It is the purpose of this author to study the statements, opinions and actions of James R. Hoffa and thus formulate his convictions, philosophy about the American labor movement.

This study of Mr. Hoffa's labor philosophy will examine in particular, his views on the objectives of the American labor movement, the means used to obtain these objectives and his views on significant areas affecting the American labor movement.

This thesis is part of a joint research project undertaken by the Graduate Institute of Industrial Relations of Loyola University in Chicago. The goal of this research project is to ascertain the relatively unexplored beliefs and philosophies of our present American labor leaders.

The writer chose to investigate the labor philosophy of James R. Hoffa for several reasons. For the past decade

the Press and Congressional Committees have focused their attention on James Hoffa and his union. When the International Brotherhood was expelled from the House of Labor, James Hoffa was able to hold his union together and redirect its growth and activities. Despite nearly two dozen trips to court, expulsion from AFL-CIO and a steady barrage of exposes, James Riddle Hoffa today is riding high. On the verge of being over-whelmingly re-elected president of the Teamsters Union at the 19th Teamster Convention in July, 1966 he is now winding up the last lap of a national sweep of contract negotiations. He has survived congressional inquisition and ordeal-at-law; the onslaughts of monitors and moralists have hardly disturbed him. He heads the biggest union in the world, the only fast-growing big union in the country. Hoffa now sets as his goal to organize every unorganized worker in this country. The labor philosophy of such a man will be important and useful in evaluating the over-all philosophy of American Labor.

#### METHOD

This thesis will follow the pattern set by the previous writers in the labor philosophy series. A ten year time limit was set, covering January, 1956 to January, 1966. The writer has surveyed the speeches, statements and writings of



Hoffa during the above mentioned span. The primary sources used were the 1957 and the 1961 revised Constitution of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, the Proceedings of the 17th and 18th Teamster Conventions and Volumes 53-63 (1956 - 1966) of The International Teamster, the official publication of the IBT. The Congressional Record and the McClellan Committee Hearings and Investigations of Improper Activities in the Labor and Management Field were studied. The New York Times as well as all the published speeches of James Hoffa were studied.

Various books were used as background to understanding the man and this time period including: Hoffa and the Teamsters by Ralph and Estelle James, The State of the Unions by Paul Jacobs, The Enemy Within by Robert Kennedy, The Teamster Union by Robert Leiter, Crime without Punishment by John McClellan, Tenacles of Power by Clark R. Mullenhof, The International Brotherhood of Teamsters by Sam Romer, and American Trucking Trends published by the American Trucking Association

In addition to a thorough study of literature about and by James Hoffa, the author interviewed Mr. Hoffa three times at the International Headquarters in Washington, D.C. The last of these interviews was on April 13, 1966. To coordinate the philosophy of James R. Hoffa the author also

interviewed Senator John McClellan and Senator Robert Kennedy and visited Teamster locals in Chicago, Detroit, New Orleans, Philadelphia, and St. Louis.

Hoffa's labor philosophy will be set forth in three main areas. After briefly examining the pressures that help mold Hoffa we will outline his concepts of the objectives of the American labor movement; the method and the means he feels must be used to accomplish these objectives will be studied and finally his views on significant factors that effect labor will be examined. Finally we will relate his statements and actions and try to formulate the labor Philosophy of James Riddle Hoffa.

## CHAPTER II

### UNDERSTANDING THE MAN

James Riddle Hoffa was born on February 14, 1913, in Brazil, Indiana, to John and Viola (nee Riddle) Hoffa. He was the third of four children. His father, a coal miner of German descent, worked in the coal fields of Illinois and Indiana and died in 1920 from silicosis. Mrs. Hoffa moved her family to Clinton, Indiana, then to Detroit, Michigan where she took a job in a manufacturing plant. James R. Hoffa's formal schooling ended and his "labor education" began when he finished ninth grade. After a job as a stock boy in a department store he won employment at the Kroeger grocery company warehouse. He recalls the long hours and low pay which finally led the men to organize.

We would report in at 4:30 p.m. and stay around as long as they wanted us. When a boxcar came in they would call a few of us to unload. The rest of the night we just sat around gabbing and trying to keep warm. For that we got paid 32 cents an hour--but only for the time we actually worked.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The Name is Hoffa, Teamsters Joint Council 13, International Brotherhood of Teamsters, 1956, p. 20.

One night a truck filled with perishable strawberries pulled into the warehouse. Hoffa, capitalizing on rampant discontent mobilized the men and urged them to refuse to work until management promised higher pay and better working conditions. Within the hour James R. Hoffa won his first collective bargaining agreement. Shortly afterwards the men at Kroeger were chartered by the AFL and in 1932 they affiliated with the Teamsters and Hoffa was awarded the charter of Local 674. Detroit was not a strong union center in 1932 and the Teamster organization was debt-ridden, split by dissension. Union official Hoffa quickly merged his local with Local 299, General Truck Drivers and began his famous organizing expansion drive. With Detroit locals in trusteeship, Hoffa was gradually able to dominate the city's Teamster movement. His preeminence was not formally recognized until after the war. In 1945, when the trusteeship was finally revoked, Hoffa was elected President of Detroit's Joint Council 43.<sup>2</sup> During the ensuing decade, Hoffa, who has never driven a truck, became the bargaining champion of the Central States highway drivers. In 1952, Hoffa became an IBT Vice President. He may have possessed enough votes to become International President even

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<sup>2</sup>Sam Romer, The International Brotherhood of Teamsters: Its Government and Structure, (John Wiley & Sons Inc., New York, 1962) p. 4.

then, but this he did not try until his reputation was more firmly established, in October, 1957. Hoffa assumed the Teamster presidency in 1958, amid McClellan committee investigations and a rebel challenge to the validity of his election. As he nears his tenth year at the head of the Union, his labor philosophy is very much in evidence.

### The Molding Pressures on Hoffa's Labor Philosophy

(A) External: "Team Drivers International Union" was chartered by the American Federation of Labor in 1899 to organize the drivers of horse-pulled vehicles. When James R. Hoffa became a vice president, the Teamsters were a major power of the AFL with a net worth of \$30 million (presently \$45 million) and a membership exceeding one million (presently 1.6 million) and a composition completely changed from the original union of horse-team drivers.<sup>3</sup>

Dave Beck, number two man in the Teamsters in the thirties and forties, replaced the second Teamster president, Daniel Tobin, in 1952. To become president Beck had to seek Hoffa support. Hoffa pondered whether to run himself and to this day he regrets he didn't. An agreement was reached

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<sup>3</sup>Sam Romer, The International Brotherhood of Teamsters: Its Government and Structure, (John Wiley & Sons Inc., New York, 1962) p. 4.

whereby Hoffa threw his block of midwestern and southern votes to Beck, in return for Beck's promise not to interfere in Hoffa activities. Just as Beck largely dominated the International during Tobin's final years, so Hoffa assumed substantial control by the middle of Beck's much shorter reign.<sup>4</sup>

The Federal Government's attack on James R. Hoffa formally began in March, 1957. For two years, the McClellan committee concentrated its efforts upon Hoffa and the Teamsters. Charges involved allegations of financial malpractice and resorting to undemocratic procedures, racketeering and violence. These McClellan hearings helped broadcast a Hoffa image. Responding to the image the AFL-CIO voted in December, 1957 to expel the Teamsters. Meany insisted that the IBT, with Hoffa as leader, was not acceptable to the federation.<sup>5</sup>

Hoffa's election in October, 1957 had been clouded by stormy opposition. Charging, in a Federal Court, that the convention delegates had not been selected in accord with the Teamster Constitution, a group of 13 dissident rank and filers challenged Hoffa's right to assume office. In a now regretted compromise, he reluctantly agreed to accept the advice of a

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<sup>4</sup>Leiter, op. cit., p. 53.

<sup>5</sup>Philip Taft, Organized Labor in American History, (Harper & Row, New York, 1964) p. 704.

court appointed Board of Monitors, and the lesser title of "Provisional President". Instead of lasting only one year, as Hoffa expected, the monitorship lasted three and a half years and chided Hoffa for failure to remove inept and dishonest local leaders in New York, Chicago and Philadelphia.<sup>6</sup>

Finally in March, 1961 Hoffa secured a court order to hold another election, which would dissolve the Board of Monitors. At the ensuing convention in July, 1961 Hoffa assumed the coveted title, General President of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters. Hoffa is virtually guaranteed re-election to the Teamster's presidency in July, 1966. "I will certainly run and I do not expect any opposition."<sup>7</sup>

(B) The Molding Pressures - Internal: The external molding pressures, opportunities and opposition that help forge a man's labor philosophy are easy to catalog. It becomes more difficult to analyze the origin of his ideas and the sources of his motivation. At five feet, five inches tall, weighing 180 pounds, Hoffa is energetic. He sees physical fitness as the primary prerequisite to an alert mind, and physical inactivity as the cause of mental lethargy. As part of his

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<sup>6</sup>Sam Romer, "The Teamster Monitors and the Administration of the International Union", Spring Meeting Proceedings, (Industrial Relations Research Association, 1961) p. 604-613.

<sup>7</sup>Time Magazine, LXXXVII, No. 6 (February 11, 1966) p. 22.

campaign for maximizing mental and physical strength, Hoffa abstains from alcohol, tobacco, and even coffee. In sharp contrast to Hoffa's assiduously cultivated self-discipline is his temper. Is his violent temper - vocabulary display an act, put on to keep his boys in harness?



## CHAPTER III

### HOFFA'S VIEWS ON LABOR MOVEMENT OBJECTIVES

Unless the American Labor Movement revitalizes itself, there won't be any unions, other than company unions for our youngsters to join.<sup>1</sup>

James R. Hoffa has had his views of labor movement objectives shaped by his more recent clashes with governmental overseers. However, when discussing general objectives he sounds the traditional themes of the House of Labor.

My responsibility is to organize the unorganized workers of America, to negotiate contracts with a minimum of lost man-hours, to recognize for the betterment of the aged, for pensions, welfare and for the protection of those individuals who belong to our union, for better security and seniority, severance pay and all that goes with a sense of decency and respect for the man who has a job and earns sufficient money to be able to take care of himself and his family, keeping in mind, that the general public can be inconvenienced by strikes, hold them down to a very minimum and only when necessary.<sup>2</sup>

This declaration of his view of objectives comes immediately after his re-election as President of the Teamsters and his long battle with the labor-rackets committee.

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<sup>1</sup>James R. Hoffa, "The Teamsters," Reprint from Labor Today, No. 3 (Winter 1962-63) p. 5.

<sup>2</sup>James R. Hoffa, Meet the Press (NBC; July 9, 1961).

After his first election as "Provisional President" of the Teamsters at the 17th Convention of Teamsters, James Hoffa described labor movement objectives.

Labor has made a great contribution to the growth of this country. . . We have no desire to become a party to disorganize the organized. There is too much to do--too many workers who need to be organized, too many workers who need better conditions, to waste our energies on internal warfare.<sup>3</sup>

Hoffa accepts the doctrine that advances by workers ordinarily depend on an economic struggle with employers and that the relative strength of each is a crucial element in the outcome.

Let's go back and look at what has happened to the labor movement in this country in the last fifty years. At the beginning of that period the word "labor" was something that people hated. We know the slave wages and slave conditions that existed. We know that men like Samuel Gompers, Dan Tobin, William Green, Phil Murray and others were smeared. They were ridiculed. They were investigated and persecuted. Yet, they kept fighting. Were they destroyed? No. Did they stop? No!<sup>4</sup>

Business unionism--the improvement of wages, hours, and working conditions is the objective of the American labor

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<sup>3</sup>James R. Hoffa, "Acceptance Speech", Proceedings of the 17th Convention (October 4, 1957), p. 628.

<sup>4</sup>"Acceptance Speech", Proceedings of the 17th Convention (October 4, 1957), p. 620.

movement. Speaking to the members of his home Local 299, he said:

Everyone who writes about me seems amazed that I call it a business, instead of a crusade or something. Well it is a business. We're not labor statesmen here. We're not humanitarians or longhairs. Look, what do you hire us for? Is it to throw a picnic for you? Is it to study the European situation? Or is it to sell your labor at the top dollar?<sup>9</sup>

It is implicit in such thinking that energetic organizational tactics must be pursued. "What we want we try to get. What we have, we keep."<sup>10</sup>

Hoffa claims to be bothered by the "lack of drive" in the House of Labor.

Unfortunately, while we have friends here from other International Unions, we fail to find organized labor, as a whole, willing to step up campaigns of organizing the unorganized worker.<sup>11</sup>

At 44, Hoffa was the fourth president of the fifty-four year old union. Two months after his election, December 5, 1957, the AFL-CIO convention met in Atlantic City and expelled the Teamsters from the House of Labor. Two months before the expulsion Hoffa warned:

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<sup>9</sup>Ed Linn, Saga Magazine (November, 1957), p. 44.

<sup>10</sup>New York Times (January 27, 1957), IV, 2:2.

<sup>11</sup>"Address to Teamster Local 688, St. Louis, January, 1959", International Teamster (February, 1959), LVI, No.2, p. 4.

Something has happened to the labor movement in recent days. I am ashamed of what I see within labor's ranks. I see men who would betray principle to get a better headline. Samuel Gompers did not formulate his program by reading the morning newspapers. . . The Teamster union will never fire the first shot in a Civil War in the American Labor movement. I have worked long years and fought hard in the cause of America's workers. I believe strongly in unity and cooperation. Only anti-labor forces will profit from a split in the House of Labor.<sup>12</sup>

Hoffa knew the split in the house was imminent.

However, he hit hard in his first Presidential address.

Instead of concentrating on the protection of individual rights and human freedom, so-called labor leaders keep quiet because they are afraid. This is not leadership. This is surrender and that we will never do.<sup>13</sup>

Aware of the McClellan committee charges he again repeated the Teamster objectives.

No one has said we have failed to bring our membership a program of wage gains and improved security never equaled in the history of organized labor.<sup>14</sup>

Immediately after his expulsion from the House of Labor, Hoffa announced large new "organizing drives". He wasn't happy over the labor split. In Seattle, he said:

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<sup>12</sup>"Acceptance Speech" (October 4, 1957), Proceedings of the 17th Convention, p. 628.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

I will tell you when the bitter editorials chastising labor unions will end and when screaming headlines vilifying labor officials will end. . . when you disappear. And then the employer will be happy.<sup>15</sup>

James Hoffa does not believe in an arm-chair labor philosophy. He is still president of his Detroit Local 299. "I think it's important for the general president to keep close to the membership." His discussions with the membership are always frank.

Unfortunately for the would-be modern day reformer workers do not behave in the manner their hazy theories presume. Most workers do not want to participate in the day-to-day operations of their union. This is the business agents job. But when people are dissatisfied or hurt, watch out for the fireworks. A leader must deliver what the people really want.<sup>16</sup>

Hoffa will talk about union goals and the unions, "responsibility to represent human values in the sweeping economic and technical changes that are taking place".<sup>17</sup> In his personal analysis, however, the union member is concerned with wages and hours. The teamster sees his union as

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<sup>15</sup> John Bartlow Martin, "How Long Will He Last", Saturday Evening Post (July 25, 1959), p. 86.

<sup>16</sup> "Chairmans Report," 1958 Central Conference of Teamsters, p. 4.

<sup>17</sup> International Teamster (November, 1957), LIV, No. 11, p. 44.

operative when in difficulty with employers and the unionists' view of Hoffa centers around the fighter for pensions and welfare benefits. In addition to the bread-and-butter motif, Hoffa exerts an emotional pull.

Hoffa as such, is not the one they are investigating, nor hoping to disturb the public about. It is the Teamsters International Union that they are trying to disrupt and destroy by this continued harassment.<sup>18</sup>

Hoffa's goals in his first years as Provisional President became almost identified with fighting labor reform legislation.

We have the same interest as the AFL-CIO in having decent legislation passed for the aged and the needy and for labor unions throughout America, so they can be properly represented across the bargaining table with the employers.<sup>19</sup>

Despite his deep concern over expulsion from the AFL-CIO and his struggle against labor reform legislation, there were occasions when he would speak out for international unionism.

Early in his first reign Hoffa addressed himself to international unionism.

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<sup>18</sup> Meet the Press, NBC, July 9, 1961.

<sup>19</sup> James R. Hoffa, International Teamster, (May, 1960), LVII, No. 5, p. 30.

<sup>20</sup> International Teamster (August, 1958), LV, No. 8.

Men everywhere are rising up to throw off the bonds of poverty and ignorance. Free trade unions must lead this fight.<sup>20</sup>

In late July, 1958, Hoffa sent a six man delegation to the International Workers Federation meeting in Amsterdam. Commenting on the meeting, Hoffa pledged full support for free trade unions and the betterment of conditions for workers throughout the world.

This fight comes at a crucial time in world history. The world of Asia, Africa and the ocean islands is awakening. Free Trade unions must continue to grow in strength and dedication to the task of overcoming economic and political servitude.<sup>21</sup>

But these words have a very empty ring to them. Hoffa's views on labor movement objectives are basic--better pay, better conditions, better security. His real problems are domestic.

In conclusion, neither expulsion from the AFL-CIO, nor a steady barrage of exposes has weakened Hoffa's position in the union. This is not because the rank and file of the Teamsters condone all of Hoffa's activities. It is because he has been able to deliver the goods. He boasts that he intends to move the earnings of Teamsters to the very top of the

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<sup>20</sup> International Teamster (August, 1958), LV, No. 8.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

nation's wage scale. "We have the same interests as the AFL-CIO," he said. He was quick to add, "However, the method and means of having this accomplished are somewhat different than the AFL-CIO."<sup>22</sup> We will now consider the method and the means--this is where we can clearly see the distinguishing marks of James Hoffa's labor philosophy.

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<sup>22</sup>International Teamster (May, 1960), LVIII, No. 5, p. 30.



## CHAPTER IV

### HOFFA'S METHOD AND MEANS TO ACHIEVE LABOR'S GOALS

#### (A) More Extensive Organizing - A Sine Qua Non:

Any employer who wants to fight you in any other branch of our business can whip the strongest local unions unless you have the support of the road, the city, the warehouses, nobody can whip the Teamsters union, nobody.<sup>1</sup>

Because multi-state area pacts are but a means toward the national pact concept with uniform nation wide conditions, more extensive organizing is a sine qua non of Hoffa's method. Hoffa describes area agreements as "major pillars in the collective bargaining structure".<sup>2</sup> He knows that to obtain the ideal his union must continue to organize. By 1961, any pretense of confining himself to jurisdictional limits was abandoned. Hoffa's 1961 convention added a new jurisdictional clause to the constitution which bluntly stated Hoffa's claim to organize "all workers, without limitation".<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The Name is Hoffa (Pamphlet; Detroit, 1955), p. 12.

<sup>2</sup>1961 Convention - Officers Report, p. 12.

<sup>3</sup>1961 Constitution Art. II, sec. I.

If we tried to spell out everything we have in this International Union, we would have to devote almost a Sears, Roebuck catalog to it.<sup>4</sup>

The union has made major gains in industrial manufacturing, and under Hoffa's leadership, it has proposed full scale organizing campaigns in public employment, mail-order department stores and the airline transport industry. Despite Hoffa's extended jurisdiction, the core of his followers continues to conform to the original jurisdiction in highway transport and intra-city drayage, supplemented by major excursions into warehousing.<sup>5</sup> The extension of jurisdiction is done by "leapfrog organizing". Drivers serve as strategic links to "leapfrog" into other industries and nontrucking occupations. As Hoffa is fond of saying, "Once you have the road men, you can get the local cartage, and once you have the local cartage, you can get anyone you want".<sup>6</sup>

We found that our economic strength in Detroit could be diluted by having a terminal unorganized in Toledo, Ohio, or by having a terminal unorganized 154 miles away, up in Grand Rapids, Michigan. We again had to move out into those areas to organize all the branches of those terminals, all the warehouse structures.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>1961 Convention Proceedings, p. 42.

<sup>5</sup>"Labor Today," op. cit., p. 4.

<sup>6</sup>Ralph and Estelle James, Hoffa and the Teamsters: A Study of Union Power, (Van Nostrand Co., New York, 1965) p. 100.

<sup>7</sup>Labor Today, op. cit., p. 4.

This organizational drive has moved the Teamsters into areas where other unions might never succeed. The South is a good example. Teamsters organizing drives in the Southwest and Southeast are recorded in 1942 and 1943. At the close of World War II, Hoffa designed a "leapfrog" organizing campaign, then maneuvered a common expiration date for Southern contracts and refused to sign in the Midwest until a comparable agreement was reached in the south. A series of short strikes, buttressed by the then legal secondary "hot cargo" pressures brought intra-state long line carriers of the Deep South into the Teamsters by the middle 1950's.

We had to move organizers from the Middle West down into the South, establishing those unions with no members and then as the trucks came into the Middle West, we organized the highway drivers and had them join the unions back home. And when we finally organized the highway drivers in the South, our position with the carriers in the Middle West was that we would not negotiate with them until they brought in the southern carriers and signed the same contract in the Middle West.<sup>8</sup>

Today the Hoffa organizing technique is still used by southern Teamsters. If unions ever arrive in the South, most credit will belong to the Hoffa organizing technique. In conclusion, Hoffa's boast in his first acceptance speech is verified.

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

Among all the charges, no one has said we have failed to organize. No one has said we have failed to bring our membership a program of wage gains and improved security never equaled in the history of organized labor.<sup>9</sup>

At one time Hoffa depended upon the crude secondary boycott. Organized secondary carriers were compelled, by a threatened strike, to cut off interlining with or making delivery to, non-union primary firms, which were thereby induced to negotiate union-shop contracts that would compel all workers to join the IBT. In many cases it was simply cheaper, faster, and more effective to apply leverage against employers rather than to try persuading workers to vote for the Teamsters. In unfair labor practice for a union to strike to force any "person to cease using, selling, handling, transporting, or otherwise dealing. . .with any other person."<sup>10</sup> Furthermore Section 303 of "Labor Management Relations Act, 1947" gave an injured employee the right to sue for damages. Hoffa attacked his fellow Teamster officials for not completing the organizing job before the Taft-Hartley Act was passed.

Now I know that certain warehouses where highway trucks back into all day long are not organized, and you know it is true. I know that

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<sup>9</sup>"Acceptance Speech" (October 4, 1957), op. cit.,

<sup>10</sup>Archibald Cox and Derek Bok, Labor Law - 1962 Statutory Supplement (Foundation Press, New York, 1962), p. 70.

certain wholesale groceries that, if it wasn't for the highway trucks couldn't exist, yet are not organized in certain territories of people setting right here in this room, and it's absolutely inexcusable for that to exist any longer.<sup>11</sup>

After the national election of 1952, the new personnel of the NLRB tightened their interpretation of the Taft-Hartley and prohibited coercion of the secondary employer through his workers. Hoffa launched an organizing campaign of voluntary cooperation.<sup>12</sup>

Truckers agreed to organizing campaigns, fearing that Hoffa's wrath might be manifested in adverse grievance decision. Hoffa's organizing techniques were modified by the increasing restrictions on the use of the secondary boycott. Landrum-Griffin outlawed hot cargo arrangements in trucking and tightened Taft-Hartley secondary boycott restraints.<sup>13</sup> It became an unfair labor practice "to enter into any contract", whereby the employer, "agrees to cease or refrain from handling, using, selling, transporting or otherwise dealing in any of the products of any other person." Violation of these provisions subjects the union to damage suits by employers.<sup>14</sup> In response to Landrum-Griffin,

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<sup>11</sup>Speech before Central Conference (November 11, 1948)

<sup>12</sup>Local 1976, United Brotherhood of Carpenters v. NLRB, 357 U. S. 92 (1958).

<sup>13</sup>Cox and Bok, op. cit., p. 45.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

Hoffa rewrote his hot cargo clause during 1960-1961 negotiations, placing the emphasis on the individual worker's right to refuse to cross a picket line and to handle hot cargo rather than on collective action through the union. Note how the clause stresses the need for employers to perform their common carrier function even if all drivers refuse to work, and it temporarily waives the union's jurisdictional claims in such an event.

Likewise, it shall not be a violation of this Agreement and it shall not be a cause for discharge or disciplinary action if any employee refuses to handle any goods or equipment transported, interchanged, handled or used by any carrier or other person, whether a party to this Agreement or not, at any of whose terminals or places of business there is a controversy between such carrier, or person, or its employees on the one hand and a labor union on the other. . . The employer agrees that it will not cease or refrain from handling, using, transporting, or otherwise dealing in any of the products of any other employer or cease doing business with any other person, or fail in any obligation imposed by the Motor Carriers' Act or other applicable law. . .<sup>15</sup>

This rewording tries to distinguish between a concerted, but spontaneous refusal to work that is possibly lawful and a secondary boycott that is unlawful. In recent test cases the courts rejected this distinction. While the

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<sup>15</sup> National Master Freight Agreement - Local Cartage  
(February 1, 1964 to March 31, 1967), Art. 9, sec. 2.

individual worker may legally refuse to cross primary picket lines, the union may not protect him in instances where secondary intent can be inferred, nor may the collective agreement permit him, at his discretion, to refuse to handle goods involved in a secondary labor dispute.<sup>16</sup> Hoffa must once more revamp his organizing technique. No one has said that he has failed to try to organize.<sup>17</sup>

The International Brotherhood of Teamsters is the nation's largest union. In 1965 it had 1,772,194 million members, gathered in more than 800 locals, serviced by a staff of 2,000 organizers and local business agents.<sup>18</sup> Its growth is rooted among drivers and warehousemen, but it now stretches its jurisdiction to include all workers without limitation. The Teamsters is one of the few unions whose dynamism has been sustained by growth. Sustained growth is one of the chief means Hoffa has relied on to obtain labor's

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<sup>16</sup>Truck Drivers Local 413 v. NLRB (Brown Transport Corporation and Patton Warehouse Inc.), The Supreme Court denied Certiorari on November 18, 1964, New York Times (November 19, 1964), p. 35.

<sup>17</sup>"Acceptance Speech" (October 4, 1957), op. cit.

<sup>18</sup>International Teamster (March, 1961), LVIII, No. 7, p. 3; (February, 1966), LXII, No. 2, p. 10.

objectives. During Hoffa's reign as president, Teamster membership has increased.<sup>19</sup> A comparison of the expense statements prepared for the 1957 and 1961 conventions discloses that keeping and gaining membership was helped with dollars. From 1957 to 1961 Hoffa spent \$6,794,545 in organizing campaigns compared with \$4,996,330 for the full five previous years. Strike benefits also were more generous; \$6,912,001 compared with a previous \$4,083,269 for five years.<sup>20</sup>

Sixty-two new locals were chartered and 65 older units dissolved or amalgamated.<sup>21</sup> Teamster locals vary from the big five (Chicago's 705,710,743, Hoffa's home local 289 in Detroit and 107 in Philadelphia) to tiny units with so few members that they went unrepresented in the 1961 convention.<sup>22</sup>

The steadily expanding network of highways, throughways, and limited access urban expressways, has contributed

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<sup>19</sup>International Teamster (March, 1961) LVIII, No. 3, p. 29.

<sup>20</sup>"Officers Report 1961 Convention," Proceedings of 18th International Convention, p. 42.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., pp. 53-56.

<sup>22</sup>International Teamster (February, 1959), LVI, No. 2, p. 31.



importantly to the increased efficiency of the motor freight business. Rapid delivery has altered the buying habits of retail stores. All these things have contributed to the growth of the trucking industry and to the sustained growth of the Teamsters.<sup>23</sup> Many another labor leader must view this situation with envy when considering the limitations placed on his method and means by economic forces which work on both prices and employment.

(B) The Strike and Economic Power:

The possibility of a strike is a necessary counterpart to free collective bargaining and an important element, even though well in the background in the process of reaching agreement. It is important to employers to be able to resist union demands to the point of bringing on a strike as to unions to be able to exert strike pressure as a means of gaining concessions.

There is little evidence that there has been much abuse of Teamster economic power. "The Teamsters are not a strike happy union", Hoffa reported to the 1961 convention.<sup>24</sup> Despite the increase in strike benefit payments, the number of strikes during the three year period from 1958 through 1960 averaged only 234 a year and involved a total of 42,000 members, less than 3 percent of the unions membership.

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<sup>23</sup>International Teamster (November, 1965), LXII, No. 11 p. 9.

<sup>24</sup>"1961 Convention Proceedings," op. cit., p. 64.

Our officers and business agents are realistic and responsible. They know the industries and companies with whom they deal, they are familiar with competitive conditions, they are in touch with their membership and understand their needs.<sup>25</sup>

Despite complaints by small employers that Hoffa favors larger firms and that he is pricing drivers out of the market,...Hoffa claims to take into account the special economic problems forced by financially weaker firms.<sup>26</sup>

A stoppage of work in one form of transportation affects all transportation. . . there will never be as long as I have anything to say about it a nationwide transportation strike.<sup>27</sup>

Although the transportation council still is a hope where the Teamsters would have one vote, other delegates would have equal voting power, Hoffa makes several clear precisions on strike power.

Hoffa believes that the relative economic strength of unions is a crucial element in his methodology. As early as the spring of 1962, Hoffa was calling meetings of friendly employers so that they could study how to overcome resistance to a national contract. By the end of 1963, the stage was

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<sup>25</sup>"Officers Report," 1961 Convention, p. 17.

<sup>26</sup>Jim Clay, Hoffa (Beaverdam Books Inc., Beaverdam, Virginia, 1965), p. 170.

<sup>27</sup>Meet the Press (NBC; July 9, 1961), V, No. 27, p. 4.

set for national negotiations, to encompass virtually the entire freight industry.

I am opposed to industry-wide national strikes. But I am not opposed to a strike against an employer who is involved in multi-operations that effectively cannot be struck unless it is a total company strike. There is a big difference in striking an industry nation-wide. It would take us a year to call a strike nation-wide and industry wide, even if everybody who has a say-so approves.<sup>28</sup>

In summary, Hoffa insists that he will never call an industry-wide work stoppage. Hoffa knows that a shutdown in six strategic terminal cities could substantially halt trucking across the country, but he views such a massive shutdown as a crude shotgun approach which would provoke undesired government intervention, probably punitive legislation. Much more to his liking are "selective strikes".<sup>29</sup> Hoffa has always used the strike weapon with discretion. He calculates the wage loss of a shutdown--lengthy strikes are poor investments. Hoffa's sparing resort to the strike does not mean that he considers it an ineffective economic weapon. Trucking companies are highly susceptible to work stoppages--some accounts may be lost forever to other means of transportation. Realizing this, most carriers capitulate before

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<sup>28</sup>Clay, op. cit., p. 170.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid.

enduring such costly and futile punishment. To Hoffa, the strike is much more than a direct action technique.<sup>30</sup>

Without the economic power of a strike Hoffa's divide-and-conquer method would be critically impaired, for no longer could he warn recalcitrant employers of selective strikes, thereby generating competitive forces which compel them into line.<sup>31</sup>

(C) Collective Bargaining: After his election in 1957, Hoffa set out to consolidate the role of collective bargaining chief. The IBT Constitution has never implicitly or explicitly given the International President the right to negotiate all trucking-freight contracts. The years 1958 to 1963 saw Hoffa gradually usurp the collective bargaining function of Teamster officials throughout the country. As Chief of Collective Bargaining, Hoffa has enhanced his prestige within the Teamsters and his plan to push area wide bargaining.<sup>32</sup> In this role he worked toward a national agreement for trucking in

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<sup>30</sup> Western Conference of Teamsters Report (February 10, 1961).

<sup>31</sup> "Convention Proceedings" op. cit., p. 55 (Statement before Committee on Merchant Marine, May 1, 1963), p. 12.

<sup>32</sup> Address before the Over-the-Road and General Hauling Trade Division, Eastern Conference of Teamsters (July 7, 1960) p. 12.

1964. In addition, most contracts were modeled to facilitate conversion to nation-wide bargaining. Regional supplements and local exceptions mixed with legal and political difficulties, have destroyed exact conformity, but Hoffa has been successful in collectively bargaining a wage uniformity. Collective Bargaining to Hoffa is a complex game of power manipulation and quid-pro-quo relationships, in which he who has the most "friends" and knows how to use them will come out on top.<sup>33</sup>

Do not tamper with the free collective bargaining machinery which has been the cornerstone of the American economy, which has produced the highest level of prosperity for all people in the history of the world. I believe that you will agree with me that the achievements of collective bargaining have been far greater than its costs. But these achievements would not have been paid for in lengthy strikes and costly lock-outs. With over 150,000 collective bargaining contracts in force and with 1/3 of the unions in non-farm employment covered by collective bargaining, the man-days lost in 1960 through strikes were 1.7 per cent of the total man-days worked. This amounts to about four hours per year for each man-year of work.<sup>34</sup>

Hoffa has several leverage techniques that he applies to his idyllic description of collective bargaining. One we

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> "Testimony before the Committee on Merchant Marine, op. cit., p. 12.

have mentioned is the common contract expiration dates. The use of the common contract expiration date enables him to utilize his power in a strong situation and extend influence where he is weaker. Collective agreements with employers in controlled sectors are manipulated to terminate at the same time as contracts in uncontrolled sectors. He simply refuses to sign in the controlled sector until the uncontrolled sector capitulates.<sup>35</sup> Common expiration dates for contracts in all industries would, according to Hoffa, enable unions to help each other without fear of secondary boycott suits. Presumably, if he returned to the AFL-CIO, this is one of the aggressive policies which Hoffa would apply.<sup>36</sup>

The amended Teamster constitution stresses the need for free collective bargaining.

To secure improved wages, hours, working conditions, and other economic advantages through organization, negotiations, and collective bargaining. . .to safeguard advance and promote the principle of free collective bargaining. . .<sup>37</sup>

The 1961 constitution is a lawyers document, designed to prepare a possible defense against later claims

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<sup>35</sup>"Address to Eastern Conference of Teamsters", op. cit., p. 4.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid.

<sup>37</sup>Constitution (1961), Art. 1, sec. 2.

that James R. Hoffa had overreached himself in carrying out his duties. While nice generalities are repeated the revised constitution is a clear insight into the Hoffa view that unions can no longer limit themselves to a narrow collective bargaining concept, but have to adjust to tending to the job security of the membership.<sup>38</sup>

If you will take the notes that I have here, based upon the area-wide freight contracts in the U. S., you will find that today there are 30 contracts in the entire U. S. dealing with freight, dealing with a majority of the local unions in the International Union. Thirty contracts will involve more than 350,000 men of this International Union directly, and indirectly probably another half-million people. Look at them and what do you find? Wherever there is area-wide bargaining you find high rates, uniformity of contract and proper recognition of security for the individual members.<sup>39</sup>

In 1964, Hoffa bargained for general truck freight-- 450,000 intercity and local cartage workers who together constituted 30 per cent of the total teamster membership. He has moved much more slowly in bringing area wide agreements to other Teamster jurisdictions. But now with an industry-wide contract negotiated for freight, Hoffa would like to

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<sup>38</sup>ibid.

<sup>39</sup>Speech - Eastern Conference of Teamsters  
(July 7, 1960), p. 10.

extend the same economic power to the remaining 70 per cent of his members. As a result of the recent legal difficulties, the plan for economic unity encompassing all transportation had to be abandoned, but the dream lingers on.

The Federal Government of the United States in two separate reports have recommended that there should be transportation unity. . .there are too many different unions going in too many directions. We hope to cure this by having a transportation council with each international union keeping its own identity, its own membership, but rather coordinating our efforts to avoid any stoppage of work.<sup>40</sup>

(D) Centralized Control: An important vehicle for obtaining labor's objectives is a tight centralized control which coordinates Teamster methodology. The Teamster Convention held every five years, has the official plenary power to regulate and direct policies of the International union.<sup>41</sup>

In 1961, Hoffa directed a significant change in the selection of delegates by local unions. His new constitution provided that all elected officers and business agents, "by virtue of such election", serve as convention delegates. If there are more elected officers and business agents than the number of delegates allotted to the local, the choice is made

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<sup>40</sup> Meet the Press (NBC: July 9, 1961), op. cit.,

<sup>41</sup> Constitution (1961), Art. III, sec. 1.



by the local union executive board.<sup>42</sup> If there are fewer, an election is held to designate the additional delegates. Some delegates at the 1961 convention protested that this clause would, "build a barricade around the rank-and-file", to do away with their say at conventions. Hoffa spiritedly defended the clause, noting that rank-and-file members could still serve as convention delegates, if they ran successfully for a local union office.<sup>43</sup> Hoffa's concept of the union is that the union's business is the prerogative of professionals.<sup>44</sup> Hoffa's accepted proposals at the convention require international officers to maintain a link with their home local. At the same time, the revision of Article III, Section I, seems to prevent disclosure of membership dissatisfaction during the normal term of local officers. Hoffa's eagerness to rewrite this section sprung from the many complaints of a rigged election at the 1957 convention. To centralize control of the Teamsters, less than 100 convention delegates were directly concerned with the primary decision-making power. This does not mean that committees function without taking

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<sup>42</sup>Ibid.

<sup>43</sup>18th Convention Proceedings, p. 365.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid.

into account delegate sentiment.<sup>45</sup> Hoffa's area conferences are organic bodies of the International Union, financed equally by the International and affiliated locals. Hoffa is aware of the potential danger of a union within a union and the constitution insists that conference activities, "shall, at all time, be subject to the unqualified direction and control of the general president."<sup>46</sup> Hoffa names the conference director, usually a vice president and must approve the conference bylaws. He may make changes in the bylaws, "as he deems to be in the best interest of the International."<sup>47</sup>

(E) Political Action: Another method at Hoffa's disposal to achieve labor's goals is political action. The political pressure is exercised through DRIVE (Democratic-Republican-Independent-Voter-Education). DRIVE operates on a concept of a community action group, utilizing shop stewards for political work at the precinct level.<sup>48</sup> DRIVE distributes a series of documentary films and political literature by the ream. In the 1960 campaign it is estimated that DRIVE had contributed

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<sup>45</sup>Op. cit., p. 79.

<sup>46</sup>Teamster 1961 Constitution, Art. 16, sec. 1.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid.

<sup>48</sup>Francis X. Quinn, "Labor At the Polls", Social Order, (November, 1958), XIII, No. 9, p. 412.

a million dollars to various candidates.<sup>49</sup> DRIVE's election strategy in 1960 was relatively simple--defeat Kennedy. Hoffa faced a delicate problem since most of the joint councils and local unions were committed to Democratic candidates for lesser office. In one issue, the union magazine, The Teamster, used pictures to show union members how to split a ballot. DRIVE's failure in 1960 did not dishearten Hoffa. Before the 1961 Convention, Hoffa called a special political session of all delegates and urged the union's business agents to pay as much attention to politics as to bargaining and grievances. "It's not the picket line or organizing," he declared, "but politics which will determine where we'll be five years from now."<sup>50</sup> The convention itself passed a resolution proposing that, "wherever practicable", each joint council engage a full time political director. Immediately after the convention, DRIVE concentrated on the formation of woman's auxiliaries, apparently in the belief that it would be easier to activate wives than members.

So I urge you, urge you that you will go home and as you never before did, engage in practical politics, go out and fight

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<sup>49</sup> Associated Press Dispatch from Washington (October 23, 1960).

<sup>50</sup> International Teamster (August, 1961) LVIII, No. 8, p. 9.

for those who are right and destroy those who would pass laws that will degrade American citizens.<sup>51</sup>

Hoffa paid little attention to national politics before the McClellan Committee investigations and the ensuing pressure for a labor reform bill. Early in 1959, to lobby against reform legislation, he called on Sidney Zagri, who was then coordinating community action program for St. Louis Teamsters. With Zagri, Hoffa bused thousands of teamsters to Washington, D.C. for meetings with their congressmen to demonstrate opposition to Landrum-Griffin, but to no avail. Landrum-Griffin Act was passed by an overwhelming majority. Convinced that political action is necessary for survival, Hoffa pushed DRIVE.<sup>52</sup> "America has failed miserably to take care of those who cannot take care of themselves." To help meet the problem, Hoffa declared the Teamsters Union will, "get out into the street and form precinct, block-by-block political action machines that will give a true expression to the needs and the feelings of the American

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<sup>51</sup>Address to Eastern Conference (March 13, 1962), p. 14.

<sup>52</sup>International Teamster pp. cit., LVIII, No. 8.

workers."<sup>53</sup> Hoffa's political stance is mostly defensive. Hoffa's interest in political action is to win legislative machinery to represent labor's interests.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>53</sup>ibid.

<sup>54</sup>ibid.

## CHAPTER V

### HOFFA'S VIEWS ON SIGNIFICANT AREAS AFFECTING THE LABOR MOVEMENT

(A) Technological Change - Automation: Widespread terminal improvements and mechanization programs have been underway in trucking, designed to expedite the handling of freight across the dock and to reduce the manpower required to handle a given tonnage of freight. There are electrically controlled retractable belt conveyors that shoot cartons into the truck or from the truck into the warehouse. Overhead traveling hoists have made loading and unloading one-man jobs.<sup>1</sup> Technological change in the view of James R. Hoffa is significantly affecting the labor movement.

Technological change is a polite word for automation--and when most people use the term, they have the habit of saying that "in the long run automation will help the worker." What they seem to forget, however, is the fact that people, those who work in our factories and fields, don't live in the long run. They live in the short run--right now. One of the most important jobs of this International Union,

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<sup>1</sup>"New Job-Destroying Technology Hits Terminal", The International Teamster (June, 1961), LVIII, No. 6, p. 20.

then, is to make sure that we are equipped to make life livable for the American worker now--in the short run.<sup>2</sup>

To Hoffa automation is synonymous with increased unemployment, displacement. Although the Teamster magazine sponsors a battery of cartoons and jokes on automation, Hoffa insists there is nothing funny about automation.<sup>3</sup> He implies that automation will probably end by changing our living standards for the better, but only at the cost of more than a little harsh readjustment. Hoffa insists on labor-management cooperation to soften the impact of automation.

If we were to sum up this problem I am sure we would find that unions and management must put their heads together and come up with a program designed to create a sure market equipped to purchase the output of a production system based upon highly automated industries.<sup>4</sup>

The probable effects of automation are still a matter of surmise. What is not a surmise is that there will be a great deal of automation technology and that traditional ways of coping with such developments are clearly inadequate. Hoffa

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<sup>2</sup>"Hoffa-Automation and the Worker" The International Teamster (February, 1961) LVIII, No. 2, p. 3.

<sup>3</sup>"As Jimmy Hoffa Sees It", Fortune (August, 1961), p. 199.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

claims labor's only tool here and now is collective bargaining.

The greatest tool we have at our command to help us do this job is collective bargaining. I believe that we can use collective bargaining to maintain employment security despite the continual growth of so called labor saving devices. It would seem that collective bargaining's role in solving some of the immediate problems of automation is in two parts: to ease the hardships and burden of these workers displaced because of adjustment and change; and to protect the earnings, job opportunities and conditions of those workers retained after the adoption of automation.<sup>5</sup>

American workers will have to pin their hopes on the gradualness of the shift to automation, on preferential hiring at plants slowest to make the change, on pensions or unemployment insurance and ultimately on the drastic reduction of the work week.

Certainly collective bargaining can and must help to adjust the rate and time of the introduction of automation. The workers and their unions should be consulted when management plans call for a shift into pushbutton operations. With reasonable advance notice of such change, labor unions can intelligently take a searching look at the possible effect a new process of machine will have on its membership in terms of earnings, seniority, and working conditions.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.



According to Hoffa automation is obsoleting an element of the working population--an awareness of the side effects of automation and an open-minded attempt at reducing the shock and disruption of unemployment must be a matter of labor policy.

In my opinion the prime consideration that must be assumed by all labor unions in this country facing the problem of automation, is to see that no employee, particularly the older worker, is thrown on the scrap heap because he presently lacks the skills demanded by industrial change. We cannot and will not allow a worker's years of faithful services to be plowed under for the sake of a new technology alone. I believe that we should insist, through collective bargaining, that such a worker be retained at company expense to operate, maintain or otherwise service the machines that threatens to displace him.<sup>7</sup>

Since automation touches upon the industrial and business world, immediate responsibility rests upon those who are most directly involved. Those who are responsible for the leadership of organized labor as well as unorganized labor share the burden of responsibility with management and the directors of industry.

Much has been said about the worker sharing in the savings of automation. If there is merit to this concept, and I think there is, we are talking about collective bargaining

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

again. For example: if operational changes reduce unit labor costs, then appropriate pay adjustments become a subject for the bargaining table. It is simple economics that higher productivity must mean higher wages if the employee is expected to be able to buy back a percentage of what he produces. And, of course, wage increases from another point of view are justified when we consider the greater skills required by technological advances.<sup>8</sup>

According to Hoffa, labor must identify the kinds of work that man is capable of performing better than our new automatic machines, analyze the skills needed for that work and the best means of acquiring them, then educate and re-educate, train and retrain the present and future members of the labor force so that all will have the capacity to be productive members of society under the conditions laid down by automation.

I believe that retraining programs will be able to convert present employees to skilled technicians and allow them to advance to better jobs without severe time or capital loss to management.<sup>9</sup>

(B) Unemployment: Outwardly, the trucking industry does not seem to have changed much in character, despite its enormous growth. Yet the cumulation of a variety of technological

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

changes have slowed down employment in a rapidly-growing industry and have enabled the present work force to produce more. Major advances were made in equipment design and construction. Coordination of truck shipments with rail, water and air carrier service is taking place in the form of "piggy-back", "fishyback", and containerization.<sup>10</sup> Piggyback is the handling of highway trailers or containers on railroad flat cars; fishyback is the handling of such containers on ships. Containerization is essentially pre-packaging freight in van-sized containers, saving handling and packing costs. Hoffa describes unemployment resulting from such changes as the nation's greatest domestic problem.

Unemployment is the nation's greatest domestic problem, if not its greatest problem. Unfortunately it is a problem which too many government officials and businessmen wish would go away. Unemployment takes responsible working people out of the mainstream of American life, tossing them back into the economic jungle. They become economic slaves on the labor market auction block. Men with hungry families depending upon them will labor for anything; a pittance. Automation and an ever increasing work force have intensified the despair of the unemployed in the U. S. The popular reference is that there are five million Americans out of work today, but that is not the whole story. Hundreds of thousands more have vanished from official sight after exhausting compensation benefits. . .there is an old saying

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p. 14. <sup>10</sup>International Teamster (May, 1961), LVIII, No. 5,

that no man knows the weight of another man's burden. Yet, the burden of the unemployed is a time bomb in our midst. Their burdens cry out for solution before the fire runs the length of the fuse.<sup>11</sup>

Despite his emotional attraction to capitalism and a vigorous free enterprize economy, Hoffa often sounds as though he believes capitalism is doomed. Thus he finds himself in the incongruous position of one who likes the present system, but is not sure it can work.<sup>12</sup> Hoffa insists that the prognosis of the Teamsters economic future is blurred. One does not see old truck drivers. The job takes its physical toll and reflexes are wont to slacken with the years. Sociologists rate the Teamster unionist in the upper lower class and being "downward mobile" in general.<sup>13</sup> The Teamster sees Hoffa as operative for him when he is in difficulty with employers and his view of Hoffa centers around the fighter for pension and welfare benefits plus the bread-and-butter motif.

Hoffa frequently chides the House of Labor for apathy in handling the unemployment problem.

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<sup>11</sup>"Hoffa on Unemployment" International Teamster, (September, 1963), LX, No. 9, p. 3.

<sup>12</sup>James, op. cit., p. 116.

<sup>13</sup>"Occupational Mobility and Extended Family Cohesion" American Sociological Review (1960), 25: 9-21, p. 385-394.

We find today, fortunately for the American labor movement, that those who have been slumbering and sleeping for the past five years are waking up. Meany is now saying for the first time in five years that there is something wrong, that there are four and a half million unemployed (and I say it is closer to seven million). There is something wrong when the automation of industry can displace men who cannot find suitable employment. These men not only lose their jobs, but they also lose their dignity. For the first time labor leaders are recognizing that professional men can be appointed to a committee with investigators, and without consultation can hand down a ruling dispensing with one hundred thousand railroad workers. This can be done, not through collective bargaining, but through a committee report to the Government of the United States. We are in grave danger of losing our liberties in this country, more so than ever in the history of America.<sup>14</sup>

After describing the problem Hoffa is quick to offer a general solution and he has tried to bargain the specifics.

Yet, we forget that we, the Americans who were born here, who have a right to believe that the constitution applies to us, have a right to believe that if we are willing to work and unable to do so because of automation, then it is up to the city, country and the state to take care of us in a standard that is required as an American.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>"Address to Eastern Conference", op.cit., (March 13, 1962), p. 12.

<sup>15</sup>"Address at the 18th Convention - IBT, July 3, 1961" International Teamster (August, 1961), LVIII, No. 8, p. 12.

A concrete program was negotiated by Teamster Local 754 in Chicago called the Dairy Employees-Milk Dealers Supplementary Unemployment Benefit Plan. The plan is financed by employer contributions and it provides a covered employee with greater income by supplementing his state unemployment compensation benefits during specified periods when he is laid off because of temporary layoffs or layoffs resulting from the discontinuance of a plant or operation. This supplement fund payment has a limit of 26 weeks and amounts to 62.5 per cent of the general rate plus an allowance of \$4 for each dependent up to five. For men over 60 years of age, the percentage of the general rate allowed is 70 per cent.<sup>16</sup>

(C) Government Interference: Hoffa's views of labor movement problems have been highlighted by the opposing force of government control.

Congress proved to be a poor negotiating team to send to the bargaining table for such great issues as job security, decent wages, protection against economic ruin from automation, protection during periods of joblessness, and other issues which are all part of any good union contract. . . Union membership has long been the reasonable and practical alternative

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<sup>16</sup>International Teamster (December, 1965), LXII, No. 12, p. 14.

to waiting for Congress to legislate fairness and equity into the market place of human labor.<sup>17</sup>

The area where Mr. Hoffa feels that American unions face their greatest challenge is that of governmental interference. Hoffa is the most investigated of modern labor leaders. He has had to meet allegations of financial malpractice and resorting to undemocratic procedures, racketeering, and violence. When poker-faced, drawling Senator John L. McClellan banged his gavel on February 25, 1957 to begin an investigation into the improper activities of labor and management, he wearily described the Committee's job as "stupendous."<sup>18</sup> After sixty-four volumes and over forty-four thousand pages, the investigations turned up all the ingredients of a Mickey Spillane thriller and a very unfavorable image of James Riddle Hoffa. The gangsterism motif led to dramatic generalizations for T.V. and newspaper audiences. The dramatized view distorted the fact that large scale infiltration of labor by underworld gangsters and racketeers was confined to a very small number of unions.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>James R. Hoffa, International Teamster (November, 1965), LXII, No. 11, p. 6.

<sup>18</sup>Paul Jacobs, The State of the Unions (Athens, New York, 1963), p. 72.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

The public failed to conclude that certain industries are readily susceptible to widespread racketeering involving employers and middlemen. Racketeering is not a labor union problem, but a social problem. Ironically, Hoffa, major target of past McClellan legislation may have been a beneficiary from such legislation. Increased governmental regulations make local organizations more dependent upon the international headquarters for guidance and assistance. The shadow of disrepute, the volatile publicity, have had poor persuasive force on the rank and the file of the Teamsters.<sup>20</sup> The average union members look on his union as operative for himself when in difficulty with employers. In addition to the bread-and-butter motif, the union and Hoffa exert an emotional pull, a type of craft loyalty, a symbol to which the union member can attach himself.

Hoffa as such, is not the one they are investigating, nor hoping to disturb the public about. It is the Teamsters International that they are trying to disrupt by this continued harassment.<sup>21</sup>

Attacks against a man's union, his steward and his business agent, people to whom he pays dues, to whom he turns

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> James R. Hoffa, "Meet the Press", (NBC; July 9, 1961).



for a job, are oftentimes interpreted as attacks on his personal loyalty.

The McClellan Committee investigations precipitated two indictments against Hoffa during 1957-1958: the Congressional bribery case, and a wiretap conspiracy case, in which Hoffa was prosecuted for spying on subordinates.<sup>22</sup> Both ended in acquittal. In addition, he was indicted in November, 1960, for mail and wirefraud in connection with Sun Valley, and indictment which was eventually dropped. Justice Department activity against Hoffa intensified after the 1960 election. Hoffa stood trial for accepting illegal payments from an employer in the Test Fleet Case. The jurors split 7 to 5 in Hoffa's favor, but this merely set the stage for another indictment, in which Hoffa and several associates were charged with jury tampering. In March, 1964 he was convicted and sentenced to eight years in prison. However, in February, 1966 the Supreme Court agreed to review the case.<sup>23</sup> Though the Teamster's lawyers had questioned the conviction on 21 points, the court limited its review to the contention that Edward Partin, a longtime Teamster employee, who acted

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<sup>22</sup>International Teamster (July, 1958) LV, No. 7, p. 3

<sup>23</sup>Time, op. cit., (February 11, 1966), p. 21.

as a part-time guard at Hoffa's hotel during the Nashville trial, had been employed by the government to spy on Hoffa-- thus violating the privacy of Hoffa's deliberations with his lawyers. Hoffa's lawyers are also busy with a July, 1964 five year sentence for mail and wire fraud growing out of his activities as trustee of the Teamster \$300 million Central and Southern States Pension Fund.<sup>24</sup> Much of Hoffa's energy was spent defending himself, but gradually his philosophical position against governmental interference was manifested. Testifying before the House Merchant Marine Committee, Hoffa declared that compulsory arbitration was an attempt to legislate free collective bargaining out of existence.<sup>25</sup>

(2) Government Intervention - Compulsory Arbitration:

Compulsory arbitration "could lead to eventual government control of the entire economy." Hoffa continued,

The International Brotherhood of Teamsters is unalterably opposed to compulsory arbitration in any form. All of organized labor has taken the same position, and most management spokesmen and students of labor relations

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<sup>24</sup>James, op. cit., p. 358.

<sup>25</sup>Teamster (May, 1963), LX, No. 5, p. 3.

are firmly opposed to a system of compulsory arbitration.<sup>26</sup>

Hoffa added ten objections to compulsory arbitration.

1. Would seriously weaken collective bargaining.
2. Board awards are not the best solution to disputes.
3. Would lead to eventual government control of entire economy.
4. Means involuntary servitude.
5. Would not guarantee continuity of production.
6. Arbitration board decisions are difficult to enforce.
7. Role of government is protective, not coercive.
8. Would encourage litigation.
9. Would become a political football.
10. Arbitration is a judicial process, while collective bargaining is a legislative process.<sup>27</sup>

One of the most disturbing aspects of labor-management relations and collective bargaining today is the continual intervention by the executive branch of the government both by direct and indirect methods. Collective bargaining by executive order is, in effect, another weapon to go with the injunction to strip American workers of their right to withhold their labor to command a just wage for their job under conditions which allow them dignity on the job.<sup>28</sup>

(3) Right to Work Laws: The third area where Hoffa complains of Governmental Intervention in the mission of labor unions is the Right to Work Law.

It is a strange expression of industrial democracy when our Federal labor policy

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> The International Teamster (November, 1961) LVIII, No. 1, p. 3.

provides on the one hand for effective union organization and collective bargaining, and on the other hand gives the various states the right to take it all away with the passage of so called "right-to-work laws, which establish compulsory open shop.<sup>29</sup>

Immediately after the New York Transit strike, when all chances for the 1966 repeal of 14 B disappeared, Mr. Hoffa declared:

Much ado is being made about the New York City transit strike. This has been seized upon by labor baiters in Congress as a propaganda weapon to push for anti-trust laws for transportation unions and for unions representing public employees. The one truth which evolves from such propaganda is this: Senators and Congressmen who vote against every measure toward the public good, medicare, federal aid to education, the war on poverty, and other broad social measures, suddenly become tremendously concerned with the public good when they can deceitfully relate the public good to more punitive laws for organized labor.<sup>30</sup>

Hoffa has been very critical of organized labor for not facing up to the problems of the labor movement. He has embarked on a program to solve the problems of automation, unemployment, governmental control by trying to develop legislative machinery to represent labor's interests. Labor must

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<sup>29</sup>"Message of the President", International Teamster (June, 1965), LXII, No. 6, p. 3.

<sup>30</sup>"Message of the President", International Teamster (February, 1966), LXIII, No. 2, p. 3.

help itself. Union membership is his practical alternative to waiting for the Congress to defend the House of Labor.

No better argument for union membership was ever put forward than the failure of the last session of Congress to act in areas vitally important to working men and women. Congress proved to be a poor negotiating team to send to the bargaining table for such gut issues as job security, decent wages, protection against economic ruin from automation, protection during periods of joblessness, and other issues which are all part of any good union contract. Even the working man and woman who have taken the step into a union to help toward a better standard of living in the 19 states where "right-to-work" laws prevail, received a cruel snub by the Senate which fell to Dirksen's filibuster on repeal of Section 14 B of Taft-Hartley. Yes, the working man who waits for the Congress to protect him in the area of decent wages, job security and protection in times of joblessness, plays a dangerous game with his own economic life. Union membership has long been the reasonably and practical alternative to waiting for the Congress to legislate fairness and equity into the marketplace of human labor.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup>"Message of the General President", The International Teamster (November, 1965), LXII, No. 11, p. 6.

## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSION

The general labor philosophy of James R. Hoffa is to seek improvement in the lot of the working man within the system of private property and private capital. The result is what has become known as "business unionism": the concentration on wages, hours, and conditions of work.

The previous pages have cataloged James Riddle Hoffa's views on labor movement objectives, on what he deems means and methods to obtain those objectives and finally what he considers the central problems of the labor movement. Hoffa has learned much from the ideas of others and has been confirmed in his belief by hard-nosed experience, hence we say his labor philosophy is pragmatic and syncretistic. Hoffa is a knowledgeable and effective labor leader.

Hoffa came out of a fierce competitive environment. His personal philosophy is pragmatic. Hoffa rationalizes his pragmatism on grounds that "life is a jungle", those who disagree are "naive".

James R. Hoffa is a "longer". He fought his way to the top of the country's largest and strongest union with the

defiant boast, "Hoffa don't need nobody: Hoffa can do the job alone." It took guts, muscle, energy, brains, and ruthlessness. Hoffa has them all, a combination that made it foolish ever to count him out. Hoffa's labor philosophy reflects his memory of goon squads, political intrigue, and calculated power plays, but it specifically reflects a Dobbsonian view that remembers millions of jobless men.

James R. Hoffa listened to the views of Farrell Dobbs on more than a dozen occasions. He appreciated the insights and knowledge that Dobbs had about the trucking industry. Farrell Dobbs, a member of a Trotskyist faction, was the dispatcher of pickets in the Minneapolis Truckers strike of 1934, and was on the payroll of the Teamsters' Union as an organizer. He was eventually ousted and indicted with fifteen other leaders of the Socialist Workers Party for violating the Smith Act. While he was a Teamster, Dobbs served as the guiding genius behind the formation of the Central States Drivers Council. Just as his Teamster star was rising, Farrell Dobbs stepped aside for a full time career as a Marxist politician. The insights and ideas from Farrell Dobbs seem to have impressed Hoffa.

Hoffa once hailed Dobbs as "a very far-seeing

individual. . .the draftsman of our road operations."<sup>1</sup> In the early thirties, Dobbs had argued that the organization of highway drivers was vital because,

miserable working conditions among any group of drivers is a potential threat to better working conditions among other drivers. Moreover, the over-the-road, is a missionary who carries the message of unionism wherever he goes.<sup>2</sup>

Hoffa will be heard echoing these sentiments frequently. To Dobbs and Hoffa organizing, a [sine qua non] is not enough. Centralized area-wide bargaining will establish uniform wages, hours, and working conditions.<sup>3</sup>

The lessons learned from Farrell Dobbs impressed him. Hoffa seems to have an intuitive negative picture of capitalist economy: automation - overproduction - unemployment - more automation - more overproduction, etc., Labor's economic stance is clouded by the trend toward monopolization. To Hoffa's economics, depressions could be right around the corner. Hoffa views government measures to alleviate unemployment, as only temporary palliatives, superficial and ineffective to counter the fundamental instability of our

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<sup>1</sup>James R. Hoffa, San Mateo Speech, 1960.

<sup>2</sup>Northwest Organizer, (May 26, 1938) p. 3.

<sup>3</sup>James R. Hoffa, "The Teamsters", Reprint from Labor Today, No. 3 (Winter 1962-63), p. 1-4.



economy. He likes the capitalistic system, but he is not sure that it will last.

To analyze a man's philosophy from his public statements and confrontations is half the picture. We must briefly look at this labor philosophy in action. We have considered Hoffa's statements as he views the adversary management or government. His conduct toward his own union and his handling of opposition on the local level show us his philosophy in action.

In the fall of 1962, Hoffa had every sector of the country lined up for his national agreement except one, the city of Brotherly Love, Philadelphia. Hoffa's man in Philadelphia, the incumbent leader of Local 107 was the controversial Ray Cohen. A strong group of rebels, "The Voice of the Teamsters" were vigorously campaigning against Cohen and Hoffa to lead the truck freight workers of the Philadelphia area into the AFL-CIO. When the Voice petitioned the NLRB for a representation election, Hoffa expressed confidence that Cohen would win by a three or four to one majority. Instead Cohen barely squeaked through by a narrow margin of 3870 to 3274. The NLRB declared that a second election would be held because of violence during the first election. Voice

leaders were elated and it looked as if there would be a Teamster scism worse than Cincinnati's milk drivers and Chicago's cab drivers. Hoffa went to work. He set up headquarters in Philadelphia and made it clear that this was a show-down battle with the AFL-CIO. He decided that Cohen had been doing a poor job of servicing the membership--claimed there were substandard rates and grievances were not being processed. He reminded Teamsters that if they went AFL-CIO he would compel carriers to bypass Philadelphia whenever possible. Further, he pledged an improved pension plan and a huge wage increase. He promised prompt handling of grievances. He gave the Philadelphia Teamsters the same Pension Plan benefits of \$200 a month as his Midwestern and Southern members enjoyed; promised raised wages from \$2.70 an hour to \$3.13 and promptly disposed of 250 out of 270 complaints and grievances. Hoffa easily reorganized the Teamsters. Hoffa moved with a kind of vigor no longer common in the labor movement.

The aggressive labor philosophy of James Riddle Hoffa has extended wage uniformity among Teamsters and altered the geographical pattern of employment throughout the industry. The practice of his labor philosophy has

revolutionized the bargaining structure and shifted the locus of authority within the Teamsters. Hoffa's successful experience at organizing, the impact of the Dobbsian ideas, the systematic area-wide bargaining, the demise of Dave Beck, centralized bargaining, the impact of the McClellan investigations, the Kennedy years, all these must be remembered when discussing the gradual evolution of the labor philosophy of James Riddle Hoffa. Subtract any one of these items and you would have had a different picture.

The accomplishments Hoffa regards as his most enduring monument are his developed pension plan and his binding of all union contracts covering local and long distance trucking into a single master agreement extending from coast to coast. The big transcontinental operators, always Hoffa's most dependable allies among management, already have accepted the framework of such an agreement. Such a nationwide agreement makes good economic sense in view of the increased centralization of ownership in the trucking field, traditionally marked by dog-eat-dog competition among thousands of small operators. However, such a plan disturbs Hoffa critics because of the concentrated power over the economy it puts in his hands.

Statements by James R. Hoffa show an occasional violation of rules of grammar, but he can bore incisively and lucidly to the heart of the matter, or plead his cause with a kind of rhythmic eloquence. Furthermore, he is informed. He cites views by George Romney, Clark Kerr, trade journals of transportation and he is at home with points of law, labor-force statistics, and the actuarial, mechanical and economic facts of trucking.

In 1966, the public attitude toward labor unions is one of growing ambivalence. The ambivalence appears to result from a dual image. On the one hand, unions have been seen as the instrument through which the worker achieves some measure of independence and dignity in industry; they represent the workers' "alternative to serfdom."

On the other hand, unions are seen as the instruments of "bosses" who wield great economic power and live in plush comfort.

If Hoffa allows himself plush comfort, truckers, inured to the swamplike moral climate of their viciously competitive industry, are not disposed to challenge the Hoffa estimate that, "life is a jungle." Nor has the public's bleak view of conventional morality been brightened by the

fact that to try to convict Hoffa, the Justice Department had to enter into intrigue with an ex-convict, Edward Partin.

The study of Hoffa labor philosophy in action is made difficult by the maneuvers of the fifteen member Teamster executive board. Their maneuvers are full of intrigue, fright and tangled emotions resembling a Kafka novel with overtones of Jan Fleming. Amid such maneuvering, the author has heard Hoffa describe his labor philosophy as pragmatic, "Every man has his price", and has heard a concurrent proclamation that American labor has no philosophy, "only a movement toward better wages and a pension."

We would describe Hoffa's labor philosophy then as pragmatic and syncretistic: he has learned much from others ideas, but has been confirmed in his belief by his experience.

It requires no profound study, no sources of whispered information, no soothsayers gift to be certain that the Teamster Union will have the doughty Detroiter back as president at the 19th Teamster Convention on July 4, 1966. Beside certain legal uncertainties in his future the questions are: When the 1964 master contract and all supplemental agreements expire on March 31, 1967 will there be a wider and continued coordination? Will the Teamsters be

able to rejoin the House of Labor and will the Teamsters be able to lead the way and find new ways to organize the unorganized in the south and rural territories of every state? One thing is certain--the answer to these questions depends on the labor philosophy of James Riddle Hoffa.

In an interview with James R. Hoffa on April 13, 1966, in his Presidential office at Teamster International Headquarters, the author asked Hoffa, "If you had to do it all over, would you choose the same career, follow the same policies, advocate the same labor philosophy?" Without hesitation came the clear response, "I wouldn't change a thing. I would do it the same way--only next time I would be more careful." The pragmatic labor philosophy of James R. Hoffa has become more careful.

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